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DIALOGUE

The Community and the Museum



From the time it was founded the members of the Philosophical Society met regularly to discuss the scientific papers one or another of their number presented, and today, to us, the titles of these papers do not sound so very different from those in a modern scientific journal. The subjects demonstrate the interests that were the stimulus for the foundation of the society — the fauna and flora, the geology, exploration, the Aboriginal people, technology — in fact they were the subjects that still endure as the primary responsibilities of a state museum in Australia: Charles Coxen spoke 'On the Marsupialia', 'Habits of the Regent Bower Bird', 'The Geology of Western Queensland', and the 'Komillaroy Tribe'; Silvester Diggles delivered papers 'On the Use of Insects to Man', 'Thoughts suggested by the Theory of Mr Darwin', and 'A Trip to Cape Sidmouth and back'. These papers were published in the *Guardian* so that the whole community had access to the information that was being collected by the members of the society. As well as being able to visit its museum to view displays the community derived this additional benefit from its existence — it was a source of expert information.

As the museum developed, and its staff and skills grew, it replaced the Philosophical Society and continued to serve the community in these two ways: by displaying objects and labelled specimens that its visitors could study and enjoy; and by providing information, not only in response to questions put to it but also through newspaper articles, educational programmes and material that supplemented the school system, and through teacher training and adult education.

The Visitors

There is no record of public use of the museum while it was in the Windmill. However, in 1871 after the collections had been moved into Queen Street, in the centre of the town, and Charles Coxen had officially been appointed the honorary curator, he inserted the following notice in the *Government Gazette*:

Rooms in the parliamentary building set apart for purposes of a museum will be open to visitors from 10 am to 3 pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Admission can be obtained by application at the Legislative Assembly Messenger's Room.

Contributions of Geological and natural History specimens and also anything else of possible interest will be thankfully acknowledged by the undersigned who will be happy to afford any information as to the scope and object of the Institution².

The displays expanded — some into the Post Office building a little further up Queen Street, others remaining in the Parliamentary building for a short time until more space became available in the Post Office building. The newly appointed custodian was also government analyst and he spent a lot of time doing mineral assays. However, he must have devoted time to the operation of the museum, for regard and affection for it in its new Post Office site was developing and its role in the community was becoming established. On 28 June 1878 the trustees approved the *By-Laws and Rules of the Board of Trustees of the Queensland Museum*. Rule 12, under the heading 'Opening of the museum to the Public' stated that the museum should be open for at least 'five days in each week and for not less than eight hours in each day'. It is probable that from the time it moved to the Post Office building the museum was open for six days a week, until on 19 April 1880 the trustees were of the opinion that the galleries needed to be closed occasionally 'for cleaning and rearranging

Previous page: George Mack with a class of teachers examining mammals (photograph from the *Courier Mail* 18 April 1955).

specimens'. It was suggested that two half days a month would be sufficient. Curator Haswell — who always looked to Sydney for inspiration — said that 'the Sydney museum was closed every Monday during the whole day'. Apparently a compromise was reached and the museum was closed every first and second Monday until 5 September 1884 when the trustees decided to close it every Monday.

In 1881 there was a debate in parliament regarding a request from the museum to open on Sunday afternoons. Petitions opposing this proposal were submitted by church groups. In spite of the opposition the museum did open on Sundays and attendances continued to increase. The Queensland Post Office Directory for 1883-84 carried an advertisement for the museum, stating that it was open to the public on weekdays — including Saturdays — from 10.00 am to 5.00 pm and on Sundays from 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm. These opening times remained until only a few years ago when Len Taylor, senior attendant since 1964, led his colleagues in successful negotiations to establish a special state industrial award for museum attendants. This made provision for weekend work in line with that enjoyed by art gallery attendants and made it possible for the museum to be open for 7 hours on each of the seven days of the week in the years leading up to 3 November 1985.

Since 1881 the galleries of the museum have been closed to visitors on Good Friday, Christmas Day and recently Anzac Day too. Between 1884 and 1970 the galleries were closed every Monday — except when Monday was a public holiday — for cleaning. However, access was still possible by signing the visitors' book in the office. The museum was closed from 7 January to 15 March 1880 for the move to William Street; from 2 November 1899 to 1 January 1901 when it moved to Gregory Terrace; and from 3 November 1985 to 2 October 1986 for the move to South Brisbane. The only other extended period when it was closed to the public was from 20 May to 15 July 1919 during the disastrous Spanish influenza epidemic when the Isolation Hospital in the Exhibition grounds had been extended to the Wool Annex in close proximity to the museum's garden³. The museum closed on 17 January 1911, the day of its noted collector Kendall



Ronald Hamlyn-Harris (*standing left*) with a class of deaf, dumb and blind children on the verandah of the museum (photograph from the *Brisbane Courier* 13 March 1915).

Broadbent's funeral. There also were day or half-day closures when the speaker of the Legislative Assembly died (11 March 1911); for the state funerals of W. Hamilton (30 July 1920), Sir Samuel Griffith (11 August 1920), J. Page (11 June 1921), T.J. Ryan (4 August 1921), and Premier E.M. Hanlon (16 January 1952); and it closed on 22 January 1936 when King George V died. At the end of World War I it closed at noon on 12 November 1918 and all day on 29 November 1918 for an Armistice Celebration. Again, at the end of World War II the museum had special holidays on V-E day (9 May 1945) and on 13 August 1945 with the news of the offer of the Japanese to surrender. When the Japanese did surrender (15 August 1945) the galleries were closed from the time of the announcement and for the public holiday the following day⁴.

The museum has also been closed from time to time because of the age of the building and concerns for the safety of staff and public. It was closed for alterations to the ground floor for the first fortnight of June 1911. After the Queensland Art Gallery had expressed doubts about the soundness of the building, before it moved out in 1974, the museum became cautious about the safety of its own display galleries. When the floor of the upper gallery seemed to be squeaking more than usual the galleries were closed until engineers confirmed that the floor was not moving. The galleries were also closed for fumigation of some display cases infested with the West Indian dry-wood termite introduced to Brisbane during World War II; and when a highly venomous rough-scaled snake escaped from its cage in the basement room of the curator of reptiles. Storm water flooding the galleries has occasionally been the cause of their closure—when the downpipes were blocked by a pigeon's nest; during the first Saturday of the January 1974 floods; and in 1985 when, just before 5 pm on a Friday afternoon, a sudden violent hailstorm broke 360 windows in the building and the museum remained closed the next day while staff mopped up and stuck plastic sheeting over the broken windows to prevent further rain entering the building.

From the time of the appointment of the first board of trustees in February 1876 some reliable indications of public acceptance of the museum are available. August that year was the most popular month with 3714 visitors, probably reflecting the arrival of country visitors for Brisbane's first Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition. This August influx of country visitors is still a major feature of the museum's attendance 110 years later. A display by the museum was also a feature at the National Association's Exhibition that year, pioneering a method of reaching a wider audience that is continued today. On the busiest day of the year in 1876 there were 539 visitors to the museum. The total number of visitors for 1876 was 28,202—16% of the population of Queensland at that time⁵. The museum was clearly enjoying considerable public regard and interest. It was attracting visitors, entertaining them, and perhaps even educating them. Certainly it was gaining support—but, of course, in those times there was little by way of regular free entertainment, consequently the museum, in a remote and raw colony starved for information and cultural activity, had virtually no competition.

Prior to the construction of its own building in 1878–79 there was an active debate, through the correspondence section of the *Brisbane Courier*, about whether the proposed site in William Street, within a quick walk of the main business centre, or a site in the Botanical Gardens, where people with leisure time went, would best serve the museum and its public⁶. The shift of the collections to the new, very visible museum building in William

Street led to a predictable leap in attendance. In 1881-82, the first year with full figures for the new building the number of visitors was 46,759.

The highest annual attendance of the century was recorded in 1886 when there were 106,907 visitors. It was disappointing then, after 30 years of growth in activities and in public support, that the financial depression and the devastating Brisbane floods in 1893 resulted in a decline in attendance to 53,342; and, with the staff reduced to three, there was little that could be done to arrest the downturn⁷. There was a brief recovery in numbers when the museum opened in the Gregory Terrace building on New Year's day 1901—Federation Day. Getting ready for the opening, visitors' comforts were considered—the board instructed the director to write to the Works Department 'to provide refreshment rooms and women's closets'⁸. He was also authorised to obtain some benches for the convenience of visitors.

On 26 January 1901 Director de Vis, reported on the opening:

Owing to favourable weather, numerous holidays and the novelty of the attraction the attendance of visitors has exceed(ed) expectation. 8188 have been registered and it is hard to say how many have escaped registration. No means of preventing access to the museum through the bush-house and corridor exist though the Works Department long ago received a memorandum from the Agricultural Department respecting the erection of a fence which would have had the desired effect. In the same memorandum the Works Department had brought under its notice the want of a Refreshment Room..... visitors are complaining greatly that they cannot get refreshments.

On Sundays the attendance has been so large that it has been found necessary to employ a third attendant to perambulate the rooms and keep any unruly element in check.

In the Annual Report for 1902 the board reported that work day visitors were fewer than when the museum was in the city—'more than half of the visitors now being registered on Sundays'. However, one of the problems with the new accommodation was—

the want of means of obtaining refreshment even the slightest, has been repeatedly urged upon our notice, and it has been more than once represented by us to the departments responsible for the neglect. We only regret that we had no power of our own to provide women and children with the means of so much as quenching their thirst.

On 30 August 1902 the board decided that the 'incoming tenant of the cottage'—the carpenter J. Berry and, no doubt, Mrs Berry—would be allowed to serve refreshments 'there being no prospect of a refreshment room being provided'. There is no record of what was served nor for how long this continued.

However, apparently the displays did not manage to hold the public's attention for it was not until 1915, after Hamlyn-Harris had revitalized the museum and had produced new displays, that the annual attendance went up again—to 75,031 visitors, notwithstanding the effects of World War I. Throughout the next few years there was little change in public attendance. In 1917 the figures were 70,154⁹. Through the early 1920s the museum continued to gain popular support. By 1925 annual attendance had arisen to 106,024 almost back to the record level of 1886—but it was now drawing on a much larger and more mobile population. That level of support has not wavered and in 1985, by 3 November when the doors closed to the public and the museum prepared for its move to South

Brisbane, there had been some 250,000 visitors of all ages who had come for entertainment or for educational classes.

The attendants are the staff members that most members of the public see when they visit the museum and they are therefore the people who are primarily responsible for public relations in the galleries. They have been and continue to be, for millions of visitors, the museum's hosts and unobtrusive keepers of orders—for they administer the museum *By-Laws*.

Down through the years most visitors have come to the museum to be entertained and to learn. Just a few, apparently, did not come for that reason. On 2 October 1883 Director de Vis reported, to the board of trustees, the first case of dishonesty on the part of visitors—

the bronze medal commemorating the opening of Epping Forest by Her Majesty and presented by the City of London has been stolen from the case in which it was exhibited.

It was stolen just one month after it had been received. On 6 April 1899 it was reported to the board that a man in possession of curios from one of the cases was arrested in the galleries but was subsequently discharged on a point of law. Most other thefts have happened after the public galleries were closed—the result of illegal entry. Gold specimens were taken in December 1888 and were never recovered. Favourite subjects for burglars have been the weapons collections—Japanese swords were taken and were not recovered. However the museum was more fortunate when an assortment of firearms carefully selected from the collection storage by a discerning burglar were discovered in an auction sale in Sydney. The museum had circulated its precise registration data on the missing items to hobby weapons collectors, one of whom identified them in the sale, called the Sydney CIB, and in due course they were restored to the museum.

In the board minutes for 1 February 1895 it was reported that the museum was frequented by prostitutes for improper purposes. The trustees decided that persons suspected of so being should not be refused admission or expelled unless they were guilty of offensive conduct in the building. After the museum moved to the Exhibition building the board, in its annual report for 1902, observed that—

By our removal from the centre to an outskirt of the city the Museum has become less accessible to.....street idlers and others, who made use of it as a convenience.

A Source of Information

In September 1871 Aplin entered into correspondence, through the pages of the *Brisbane Courier*, concerning reports on possible methods of formation of gold nuggets, over the address of the museum¹⁰. This subject, fascinating to the public then, as now, may mark the beginning of the history of the museum as a source of expert information in its areas of authority. At about the same time, perhaps impressed by this evidence of the services a museum could provide, a supporter, writing to the *Courier* under the name 'Cosmos' put forward a series of arguments for a proper building for the museum and for professional staffing¹¹. In 1873, Staiger's first report as custodian indicated how much his services as an analytical chemist were in demand, assaying mineral specimens for prospectors who were actively searching Queensland for profitable mineral fields¹².

Back in 1881 the museum's library was advertised as being available to students. This service appears to have arisen because of the lack of a

IF THEY LIVED TO-DAY!



From the beginning the museum has been a source of expert information for the community. The cartoonist appears to have had some conceptual difficulties regarding the vertebrate fauna of the Darling Downs (cartoon from the *Sunday Mail* 28 July 1929).

The artist has a vivid impression of the giant marsupials whose fossil remains were unearthed at Brigalow, Darling Downs, and identified by Mr. Heber A. Longman, Director of the Queensland Museum.

public reference library, so the museum was meeting a wide range of public needs and quite clearly was doing so capably.

When de Vis became director in 1882, the board of trustees indicated in its annual report that the museum was helping schools of arts by undertaking for them the preparation and naming, for exhibition, of their collections of geological, mineralogical and zoological material. While it is not clear how many of the schools of arts throughout Queensland sought the museum's help in this it seems to have been the first attempt by the museum to spread its expertise and knowledge outside Brisbane. By 1888 state schools were being supplied with collections of common minerals. In 1889 a collection of 1000 mineral specimens from mines in Queensland were prepared for display at Dunedin in New Zealand but, for some reason, the collection was never sent.

de Vis, who was an active research worker, maintained contact for his first 10 years in office with his professional colleagues in other museums

by correspondence. In 1891, the first number of the *Annals of the Queensland Museum* was published. This was the museum's first effort to bring its serious work to a wide international readership. The *Annals* continued to No. 10 published in 1911 when, early in R. Hamlyn-Harris' term, its title was changed to the *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum* with the 1912 issue. It continues today as the museum's scientific journal and in it appear the articles that record the work of its staff and of others working on its collections. The journal is exchanged for other scholarly publications from about 400 museums, universities and scientific institutions around the world.

de Vis also pursued a very active public relations programme, corresponding with many persons and soliciting specimens and support for the museum. He made lengthy reports to the board at each of its monthly meetings and the proceedings at these meetings, together with his reports, were regularly published in the *Brisbane Courier*. It was a means by which the community became aware of the activities and expertise in the museum and it undoubtedly resulted in donations of material that expanded the collections.

When Hamlyn-Harris became director in 1910 he embarked on a similar public relations programme as one of his measures to revitalize the museum. He corresponded with the general public and with professional colleagues throughout the world. He appealed in *The Queenslander* for public support for increasing the museum's collections and soon had interested people actively collecting a range of natural history material in various parts of the state, including Toowoomba, Woodford, Townsville and Maryborough¹³. In an effort to further improve the collections he issued appeals for suitable specimens by circular letter to members of local communities, and through provincial newspapers. Members of the public responded well and their letters—such as that from the manager of Prince Alfred Mine, Sunnymouth, subsequent to an article in the *Chillagoe Standard*, with information on an unusual lizard¹⁴—can be found in the correspondence files. Hamlyn-Harris also appealed for Aboriginal artefacts in a circular letter to the police inspectors in all police districts (see Chapter 10).

In 1912 Hamlyn-Harris started a series of public lectures on natural history. These were advertised through the Field Naturalists' Club, the University of Queensland, schools and the newspapers. They were held once a month, at first in the afternoons but from 1915 at 8.00 pm on a Friday. They appear to have been well attended, for the museum was allowed to use the concert hall—still leased to Brisbane City Council—and other 'engagements of the hall (were) made to accord' with the museum's lecture programme¹⁵. Various museum staff and guest lecturers presented topics, illustrated with specimens, lantern slides and moving films, covering biology, geology and anthropology. Heber Longman was promoted to deputy director in 1912 and those he lectured to included the Toowoomba Scientific and Literary Club, and Kindergarten Teachers' College students.

Until 1911 there were no organised school excursions to the museum but teachers from the East Brisbane State School, Kangaroo Point Girls School, and Leichhardt Street State School arranged visits. Then, in 1912, with agreement of the Department of Public Instruction, Hamlyn-Harris offered a programme of talks for organised school visits. For some schools the cost of travel prevented attendance but at least 13 schools, among which were Ipswich North Girls School, Leichhardt Street Boys School

The
Queensland Museum,
Bowen Park, Brisbane.

Founded
A.D. 1855.

Telephone
315.

SYLLABUS
OF
LECTURES
SESSION 1915.



"A Museum is a Consultative Library of objects, where people can see for themselves the things of which they have read in books."—T. H. Huxley.

All Interested Cordially Invited.

Admission Free.

and Bowen Bridge Road School, indicated that they would be able to attend. In 1918 the lectures to school visitors attracted 26 classes from 18 schools. Longman also gave a series of lectures at night to scouting groups, and extramural lectures were given to interested groups. For example, Henry Tryon, formerly assistant curator under de Vis and now entomologist with the Department of Agriculture, spoke to students from the Teachers' Training College on 'Food of our useful Birds'.

Hamlyn-Harris' other innovation in this period of development of the museum's services were classes for handicapped members of the community. He himself helped when parties of deaf children visited the museum. It was a pattern that was to be repeated by George Mack in 1950 with weekly classes for blind children and ex-servicemen.

H.A. Longman was the first director to contribute a weekly natural history column to the *Brisbane Courier*. It began in 1918 and was a popular feature—and there are museum staff members today who had their inspiration to become naturalists from this column. Much later the distinguished naturalist David Fleay, an honorary associate of the museum, continued these nature notes. Tom Marshall also had a weekly fishing column in the *Telegraph*. Radio and television also became media through which information could be communicated to the community. Museum staff, between the late 1930s and 1950s, gave monthly talks on radio and in more recent times they have been regular guest performers on television especially in children's programmes.

Apart from its scientific journal the museum's more popular publishing programme had a false start when, on 26 January 1901, Director de Vis tried unsuccessfully to persuade the board that, since his own time

THE QUEENSLAND MUSEUM.

POPULAR SCIENCE LECTURES.
SESSION 1915.

The following LECTURES, illustrated by specimens, diagrams, &c., will be given in the Exhibition Hall (next to the Queensland Museum) as follows:

Friday Afternoon, at 3.30 p.m., APRIL 30th—

"Native Life in the New Hebrides."

Mr. DOUGLAS BANNIE.

Friday Evening, at 8 p.m., AUGUST 27th

"Customs of Various Races"

Part I.—Family Life.

(Illustrated with Lantern Views.)

Dr. R. HAMLYN-HARRIS.

Friday Afternoon, at 3.30 p.m., MAY 26th

"Some Remarkable Queensland Fishes."

Mr. H. A. LONGMAN.

(Specimens demonstrated by Mr. J. Douglas Ogilby.)

Friday Evening, at 8 p.m., SEPTEMBER 24th—

"Customs of Various Races"

Part II.—Social Life.

(Illustrated with Lantern Views.)

Dr. R. HAMLYN-HARRIS.

Friday Evening, at 8 p.m., JUNE 25th—

"Insects and Flowers."

(Illustrated with Lantern Views.)

Dr. J. SHIRLEY.

Friday Evening, at 8 p.m., OCTOBER 29th—

"The Great Barrier Reef."

(Illustrated with Lantern Views.)

Miss F. BAGE, M.Sc.

Friday Evening, at 8 p.m., JULY 30th—

"Minute Life in the Sea."

(Illustrated with Lantern Views.)

Dr. J. HARVEY JOHNSTON.

Friday Evening, at 8 p.m., NOVEMBER 26th—

"Extinct Animals."

(Illustrated with Lantern Views.)

Mr. H. A. LONGMAN.

The 1915 programme of a popular series of lectures that Hamlyn-Harris gave each year from 1912 to 1916. They were held in the concert hall of the Exhibition building.

was best spent writing descriptive labels to 'improve the utility of the displays', it should employ some 'literary man' to write a guide to the museum. Much later, in 1939, a Miss H. Nowland was appointed for three months to write a handbook but this does not seem to have got far. With the exception of George Mack's booklet on the Centenary of Queensland and a small handbook on the Great Barrier Reef¹⁶, publishing of handbooks began in the museum only after 1970 when the series *Queensland Museum Booklets* began. The series now includes works on a diversity of subjects, such as *The Middle Kingdom: Pre-revolutionary China*, *Eucalypts of the Brisbane*, *The Mud Crab* and *Queensland in the 1860s: The Photography of Richard Daintree*.

However, despite the organised programmes of talks, publications, newspaper articles and television and radio appearances, the most appreciated service performed by the museum may be the information that it gives in response to specific questions put to it. The earliest records of this activity are available for 1876 when the first board of trustees began keeping letter files. These reveal that even at that stage the public was referring to the museum a wide range of natural history inquiries, particularly regarding identification of specimens.

This has continued to the present day — every week the museum responds to hundreds of letters, telephone calls and visitors requesting information. The queries come from members of the public and from institutions, including universities and government departments such as Customs and Excise, Primary Industries and National Parks and Wildlife Service. Possibly the greatest range of inquiries come to the history and technology section. In natural history snakes and spiders are most often the subject of inquiries but, as well, information on birds, molluscs, fish, jellyfish, mammals, other reptiles, insects, crustaceans and fossils is sought. For some of the questions most frequently asked free leaflets provide the essential information. As an extension of this service, museum experts provide information and specimen identifications, especially of snakes and spiders, for the Poisons Information Centre at the Royal Brisbane Hospital, other hospitals, medical practitioners and ambulance officers throughout the state and at all hours. Valerie Davies curator of arachnology from 1972, and Jeanette Covacevich, curator of reptiles from



1966 contributed chapters to the standard handbook on Queensland toxic organisms¹⁷.

An Education Extension Service

Apart from Hamlyn-Harris' efforts to develop museum programmes for visiting schools there was not any formal extension service from the museum, although it would have been welcomed by the Education Department, until January 1938. Then an opportunity to develop extension programmes occurred when the museum received a Carnegie Trust grant of £1000 for a two-year programme:

to visit the Primary Schools of the metropolitan area for the purpose of developing the educational services of the Museum, of arousing in the children a desire for more information about the world around them, and of placing before pupils and the public generally the merits of the Museum and the advantages which would accrue from a close study of the exhibits housed therein¹⁸.



W.F. Bevington conducted a museum extension programme funded by the Carnegie Trust. *Opposite page*: Bevington with a class of children from the East Brisbane State School; *this page*: an enthusiastic response from the class (photographs from the *Brisbane Telegraph* 10 February 1938).

The terms of reference were soon expanded beyond state primary schools to secondary and private schools.

W.F. Bevington and A.G. Davies were appointed liaison officers to conduct the programme. Bevington had retired from the position of district inspector of schools the previous year at the age of 65. Presumably Davies did participate in the programme—however his contribution appears to have been eclipsed by Bevington's. The *Telegraph* reported on 1 July 1939 that Bevington had lectured to more than 100,000 students during 1938 and referred to him as 'Brisbane Museum's Father Christmas'. As well as visiting the schools, Bevington devoted Fridays to working with groups which visited the museum. As a follow-up, these children were often required to give short lectures and write essays on subjects studied during their visits. Bevington also promoted the Queensland Nature Lovers' League which operated clubs in many schools to encourage children to care for animals and protect native flora. W.F. Bevington issued many hundreds of membership certificates for the League.

It is clear that Longman cooperated with the programme—he wrote in 1939:

I shall be very pleased to welcome a party of your boys (Young Australia League) at the Queensland Museum on the Sunday of Exhibition week at 3 p.m., as on several previous occasions..... We hope to be able to welcome the party of girls also, on Saturday, August 12 and perhaps Mr Bevington will be available on that occasion¹⁹.

As well as his direct contacts with the children Bevington advised teachers on the teaching of natural history and the preparation and use of charts and specimens. In his annual report for 1939 he mentioned the possibility of establishing a teachers' museum and assembling a teaching collection:

The wide choice (of species) proves rather bewildering to the average teacher..... Could he but have a collection arranged by scientific men..... he would have much more confidence and then be likely to make a success of this branch of his work²⁰.

It is not clear when Bevington finished at the museum. The last record of any activity was on 21 June 1940 and he had certainly left by March 1941²¹. He died, aged 72, in Brisbane in January 1944 after a brief illness. The education programme he had developed did not continue until nearly 30 years later when a permanent education officer was appointed to the museum staff and a teacher, seconded from the Education Department, carried museum programmes into the state primary schools in country areas.

Some school programmes continued in the museum, however. George Mack, who became director in 1945, instituted a series of lectures during the 1950s that were given in front of certain displays for visiting schools. The enthusiastic public response to these talks led to the development of questionnaires for children to answer in the display galleries. Showcases were numbered to link them to specific questions. After 30 minutes a bell was rung and children brought their questionnaires to the foyer for checking by assistants such as Shirley Gunn and Shirley Billing (née Deller). However, by far the most important of his innovations were the holiday programmes. In the school holidays of January 1952 three weeks of talks, films and question time were first presented by Mack to over 3000 adults and children.

One idea of Bevington's that was not so long in being put into practice was that of having collections for schools arranged by museum scientific staff. The museum had always lent material – duplicate or non-type material – to institutions, exhibitions and individuals for teaching or other educational purposes. However, in 1948 a formal loan scheme for schools began when two collections of named natural history specimens were assembled for classroom use; at first for student-teachers, but later for classroom use by teachers. In the early 1950s the Department of Public Works (at Ipswich) manufactured a number of wooden boxes for loan-kits. By 1965 there were almost 1000 requests for loan kits and the scheme continues to this day.

Another programme to help teachers was developed during the 1950s when week-long refresher courses in natural history were presented to groups of up to 30 teachers. The government provided free rail passes to encourage teachers throughout the state to attend.

An Education Section

John C. Hodge was the first museum education officer. He was appointed in 1967 and was the only education officer for five years until F.D. Dale joined him in 1972. Before Hodge left in 1975, to become lecturer



George Mack with children (photograph by courtesy the *Brisbane Telegraph*).



Shirley Gunn demonstrating a specimen of *Chironex fleckeri* — the lethal Box Jellyfish (photograph from the *Courier Mail* 21 December 1954).



Sir Henry Abel Smith (*second from left*), governor of Queensland, was keenly interested in birds, and organised this field trip to Girraween National Park in 1965. With him (*L to R*) are William Goebel naturalist, local property owner, and friend and donor to the museum; ornithologist Hugh Innes; and Don Vernon. In the rock cleft is the nest of the Superb Lyre Bird (photograph by courtesy the *Courier Mail*).



John Hodge, museum education officer, with a school class in the early 1970s.



A touch specimen—the Barn Owl, *Tyto albus*.

in museum studies at Sydney University, he had established the education section and had developed a comprehensive programme of activities based on the museum's expertise in the areas of its responsibilities, and backed up by its collections of objects.

When first appointed Hodge saw the education section as functioning not only to assist visiting groups and lend specimens to schools, but also giving:

advice and assistance on identification, preparation, preservation and display of biological materials for school museums. We are also concerned with evaluating current popular literature and biological supplies²².

He was contemplating the further development of Bevington's ideas for the production of loan kits consisting of:

a box which will contain specimens, black and white pictures, film loops, Kodachromes, work sheets and tape recordings would appear to be ideal. For example we could do one on the Barrier Reef, or Rocky Shore Animals or Aboriginal Culture etc. etc.²².

In 1971 Hodge received a Churchill Fellowship for travel overseas to study museum education. He visited a large number—73 in all—of museums, both large and small, in Canada, the USA, Great Britain and Europe during the period 14 May to 21 October 1971. In his report he recommended, among other things, that short in-service courses for teachers—which had been regularly offered in the 1950s under Director Mack—be re-introduced; that teacher trainees be instructed in the use of museum resources and services; that the museum support research into education by its staff; that a comprehensive school loan service be developed; and that a sales outlet be established in the museum. Only the last recommendation was put into practice soon after and the museum now retails publications that have been assessed by its curatorial staff.

The loan materials at the time Hodge made his report consisted of mounted animal specimens in boxes. Supporting literature or other material was not provided. Schools could borrow two of the thirty kits for one week. The museum paid the freight to the school and the school was expected to pay the return freight. Because funds were not forthcoming to expand the scheme to any great extent Hodge did not advertise the loan kits. Eventually, in 1984 long after Hodge had left, two technicians were appointed under the Commonwealth Employment Programme to develop and produce new kits.

However, Hodge did promote the school programmes that were conducted at the museum. Actually, the scarcity of good natural history films for public programmes had prompted staff as early as 1953 to begin making their own, and an effort was made then to film every live specimen brought to the museum. Hodge developed this idea further and audiovisuals on a range of subjects were produced to form the basis of the school programmes.

From February 1973 it was his policy to offer set programmes each term²³. In 1973 eight were being offered to visiting schools and a ninth, *Australian Transport*, was being prepared. Programmes offered in 1974 included *Human Ecology*, which provided a choice of two activities following the audiovisual—either a board game played by four teams of students, simulating man's various impacts on his environment, or a mock court trial concerned with sandmining at Cooloola.

In June 1974 Hodge obtained, from the Department of Education, a colour video recorder and monitor for in-service training programmes and

for educational purposes associated with school and teacher trainee visits. He also used these for new audiovisual programmes: *Pioneer Life* and the *Coral Reef Ecosystem*. The latter used four slide projectors and a 16 mm movie sequence, and was supported by a display of a variety of reef animals. The *Pioneer Life* programme featured a short drama written by a producer of ABC schools broadcasts, Jill Morris, which the children acted after seeing a 20 minute audio-visual about early white settlement in Australia. In 1975 three more audiovisual programmes were made, forming the basis of structured presentations to school groups visiting the museum. The topics were *What's at the Museum?* — a brief general introduction to the function and history of the museum, designed for grades 3 to 7; *The Aborigines: An Appreciation of the Difference* — on the culture of Australian Aborigines and their relations with more recent immigrants, for grades 6 to 10; and *Australian Animals* — a survey of Australia's fauna for grades 3 to 6. The first programme was screened to the public during the August school vacation of 1975, before being used for school visits. These presentations lasted about one hour and included a 'touch' display of museum specimens and artefacts, and were followed by the students completing worksheets. In 1976 production was underway on a programme about the collection and interpretation of fossils. This featured the work of Michael Archer, then curator of mammals, studying fossil remains of the carnivorous marsupial, *Thylacoleo*, found near Alice Springs.

It has always been the policy of education staff to emphasise the use of the public displays by students who visit the museum: 'The primary interest of any museum is its displays. Our educational activities revolve around the displays, and no group leaves without seeing some of them'²⁴. Education officer Dale stated then that special classes or worksheets could be arranged for groups such as handicapped children and tertiary students²⁴, but the limited staff and facilities often made it difficult to meet such special requirements.



Children examine the fossil skeleton of a diprotodon, 1975.



A school class pays a visit to the museum.



The education extension service brings the museum to schools as far away as western Queensland. Here children help education extension officer Peter Webber repack the museum van after a visit to their school.

Holiday programmes, recalling those first introduced by Mack in the 1960s, were also presented. The first of a new style was offered in January 1972. It was restricted to 12 year old children, who were invited to spend five mornings studying the history of paper manufacture and paper's uses including microscopic examination and specialist demonstrations. Children learnt to make paper by hand and visited the Australian Paper Mills works at Petrie. A holiday programme about fossils and dinosaurs was run in January 1977. As part of the week-long activities children constructed a cardboard dinosaur nearly 3 metres long. During the next few years holiday programmes offered the same activity each day for a week so that more children could take part. Topics included making aboriginal-style wood and shell implements, kite making, fence painting, gum-bichromate printing, and painting and drawing from gallery exhibits. Film programmes and story telling also attracted large audiences though the present education staff have tended to avoid activities, such as film screenings, that, unless closely related to museum displays, can more appropriately be presented by other institutions.

Although many schools in the metropolitan area were using loan kits and bringing their classes to the museum those further afield could not. Therefore, in 1978, the director had discussions with the Education Department — of which the museum was then a part — about the reintroduction of an extension service. It was agreed that the department would provide staff to operate such a service, taking the museum — specimens, audio-visual programmes and activities — to country schools, chiefly those in southeast Queensland which could not visit the museum because of the transport costs and time. The museum provided the vehicle and all the teaching materials. The first extension education officer, Douglas J. Pauli, appointed in September 1978, had wide experience in innovation within the department as a science advisory teacher. In his three year term he devised a range of programmes similar to those offered at the museum itself but specially adapted to suit students in the classroom. Pauli completed his term at the end of 1980 and was succeeded by Greg Storey who, after a two-year term, was replaced by Peter Webber. Apart from its primary role — that is the use of museum resources to supplement school programmes — the extension service has promoted the museum in country areas by providing displays at country shows and provincial shopping centres, and frequently attracting the attention of the local media. 'The man from the museum' has become a recognised celebrity again, harking back to the days of Bevington.

The teaching of Aboriginal culture in schools and the contribution museums can make to this has been a particular interest for Roger Hardley in the Australian ethnography section. To this end he forged links with those colleges of advanced education which train teachers, and he worked in close co-operation with the museum's education section, particularly with the extension education service.

Turning its attention to older students, the museum participated in the work experience programmes that were introduced into some Brisbane high schools in the mid 1970s. Since 1978 the museum has provided opportunities for senior high school students to spend one or two weeks working in various sections as museum assistants. Because of its diversity of activities the museum could offer an extensive choice of work-experience in scientific, educational, art, preparation and clerical sections. In some instances these students have made useful contributions to the museum's operations, and many have subsequently returned as volunteers



School holiday dinosaur project, 1982. Rhonda Scoullar, education officer (*on left*).



Items purchased with funds from the Utah Foundation are featured at an open day in 1981. With the pennyfarthing bicycle is D.J. Robinson, curator of history and technology.

during their vacations. Several members of staff were introduced to museum work initially through the work-experience programme.

Now, in 1986, the new facilities at South Brisbane will make it possible for the education section to further expand its activities and offer programmes that supplement those in the schools and provide teachers and students alike with a range of stimulating material.



Museum publications on sale at its bookshop in 1984.



Margaret Oakden, staff artist 1972–80, who prepared the series of mammal prints marketed by the museum from 1973.

Entrance Foyer-Bookshop, Queensland
Museum 1984.

